

**Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services (DCLS)
Virginia Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program
(VELAP)**

**Program and Application Process
Frequently Asked Questions
Revised July 12, 2013**

Is my laboratory required to become certified under Virginia's Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (VELAP)?

Yes, if your laboratory is providing air, waste, or water data to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), or your laboratory does analysis for a client that provides data to DEQ.

There are exceptions. If your laboratory only does field testing, certification is not required. If your laboratory only does analysis for citizen monitoring groups, your laboratory must meet DEQ's requirements but not those of the VELAP. If your laboratory is owned by an institution of higher education and does research for DEQ, call your contact at DEQ to determine if your laboratory will be required to be certified. Please see the regulations at 1 VAC 30-45-30, 1 VAC 30-46-30, and the definition of "environmental analysis" in either chapter.

My laboratory needs to become certified. Which regulation applies to my laboratory?

Non-commercial environmental laboratories apply for environmental laboratory certification under 1 VAC 30-45. Commercial environmental laboratories apply for environmental laboratory certification under 1 VAC 30-46.

What is a commercial environmental laboratory?

A commercial environmental laboratory performs analysis for another legal entity. For profit commercial laboratories are the most common example of this type of laboratory. Please see the definitions of "commercial environmental laboratory," "environmental analysis," "environmental laboratory," and other related definitions in 1 VAC 30-46-40.

What is a noncommercial environmental laboratory?

A noncommercial environmental laboratory performs analysis only for its owner. An example of a noncommercial environmental laboratory is a laboratory at a wastewater treatment plant owned by a local government that does laboratory work only for the treatment plant to meet the requirements of a DEQ wastewater permit. A noncommercial environmental laboratory may also perform analysis for another legal entity under

specific circumstances. Please see the definition of “noncommercial environmental laboratory” for these circumstances. Please see the definition of “environmental analysis,” “environmental laboratory,” and other related definitions in 1 VAC 30-45-40.

Where can I find 1 VAC 30-45 and 1 VAC 30-46?

Copies of both regulations are available at the VELAP web page (www.dgs.virginia.gov/dcls).

The regulations are part of Title 1 of the Virginia Administrative Code (VAC). 1 VAC 30-45 can be downloaded from the VAC website by going to <http://leg1.state.va.us/000/reg/TOC01030.HTM#C0045>.

Click on “create report.” On the next screen, enter a range of sections, or leave those blank to see Chapter 45 in its entirety. Click on “submit.”

1 VAC 30-46 can be downloaded from the VAC website by going to <http://leg1.state.va.us/000/reg/TOC01030.HTM#C0046>. Follow the same directions as those for 1 VAC 30-45.

What standards must my laboratory meet to be certified?

Commercial environmental laboratories must meet the requirements of the 2003 National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) standards.

Noncommercial environmental laboratories must meet a limited version of these standards. The 2003 NELAC standards are incorporated by reference into 1 VAC 30-46. 1 VAC 30-45 specifically sets out the standards laboratories must meet.

Where can I find a copy of the 2003 NELAC Standards?

The 2003 NELAC Standards can be found at the NELAC Institute website (www.nelac-institute.org). Click on “Standards” and then on “Current Applicable Standard” to find the 2003 NELAC standards. You may download a .pdf file.

The 2003 NELAC Standards are contained in a long and complex document. Do I need to read the whole thing?

1 VAC 30-46, Part II - Standards specifies which chapters and sections of the 2003 NELAC Standards are incorporated by reference. Laboratories will need to understand these requirements to become certified under the program.

How will my laboratory be certified?

Your laboratory will be certified by Fields of Certification under 1 VAC 30-45 or Fields of Accreditation under 1 VAC 30-46. Fields of certification or accreditation are defined by matrix, method, and analyte. The matrices offered are air emissions, non-potable water,

solids, and biological tissue. The commercial laboratory program also offers drinking water as a matrix.

Why am I being asked to get an EPA ID Number for my laboratory?

Your EPA Lab ID is a unique identifier for your laboratory, and you will be asked for that number when you report the results of your analysis of Proficiency Test (PT) samples to your PT provider. This number will be required to assure that your PT results can be submitted electronically to DCLS by your PT provider. To obtain an EPA ID number, contact EPA's Cincinnati office at (513)569-7671, or contact the Laboratory Certification office (Lab_Cert@dgs.virginia.gov) for assistance.

Do I send all PT results to DCLS?

For Chapter 45 laboratories and for Chapter 46 primary laboratories, send paper copies of your PT reports from the two most recent successful rounds for each Field of Certification or Accreditation requested **with the initial application**. Afterward, when you submit your PT results to the provider, request that the PT provider send your results directly to DCLS.

For Chapter 46 secondary laboratories, please DO NOT request reports to be sent to DCLS. Proficiency testing is managed by the primary accrediting body only.

What is the timeline for processing an initial application?

The regulations describe the application process and associated timelines at 1VAC30-45-70 and 1VAC30-46-70. The process can take up to 12 months from the initial submission of an application until certification or accreditation is achieved. *Much of the timeline for achieving certification or accreditation is dependent on the laboratory's knowledge and implementation of the requirements and preparation in advance of submitting an application.*

The applicant laboratory is encouraged not to submit its application until the following have been done:

- Download and review the Chapter 45 or Chapter 46 Regulations, provided on the VELAP web page at www.dgs.virginia.gov/dcls [see REGULATIONS]. Download and review the [2003 NELAC Standard](#) from the [NELAC website](#) if you seek Chapter 46 Accreditation.
- Review the quality manual against the Chapter 45 or Chapter 46 Quality Manual Checklist [see FORMS]. The laboratory's Quality Manual must meet the requirements of the appropriate regulation or standard as referenced on the Checklist.
- Update the Quality Manual, if needed, to comply with each requirement listed on form DGS-35-197, Chapter 45 Quality Manual Checklist for New Applicants, or form DGS-21-182, Chapter 46 Quality Manual Checklist for New Applicants. Complete the Quality Manual Checklist form by citing the

exact location, by page or section number, of each Quality Manual checklist requirement.

- Take note of the checklist items that require the submission of supporting documentation. Gather and supply clearly labeled supporting documentation as requested.

An application will not be determined to be COMPLETE unless the Quality Manual is fully compliant with the regulation. A site visit cannot be scheduled until the application is determined to be COMPLETE. Any non-compliance in the quality manual or failure to submit supporting documentation as requested will cause the application to be determined to be incomplete. This causes lengthy delays in the laboratory's achievement of certification or accreditation.

Determine the list of matrix / method / analyte combinations for which your laboratory will seek certification. *Note that DCLS certifies or accredits only for those parameters required for compliance with Virginia's air, water, and waste regulations.* Communicate these selections in the Excel database provided with the application.

For secondary applications under 1VAC30-46, apply ONLY for those Fields of Accreditation held by the laboratory in its primary accreditation. The application can be expedited by creating a cross-walk to show the verification of each requested FOA. For example, a printed list of selected FOAs noting the page number and line number of the requested FOA on the primary scope of accreditation will greatly expedite the validation of the application's requests.

Is additional information available?

Interpretations of the regulations and other guidance can be found on the VELAP web page at www.dgs.virginia.gov/dcls. Forms, checklists, quality manual and SOP templates, technical assistance documents, and other current resources are also available on the web page.

How do I contact the DCLS Laboratory Certification Office?

E-mail Lab_Cert@dgs.virginia.gov or call (804)648-4480 and ask for "Laboratory Certification".